

have imposed on the employers of this country for many, many years. Many of the Congressmen are having trouble coping with them and have not even begun to understand the implications of what we passed.

Both Houses have passed versions of a line-item veto for the President.

Both Houses passed legislation to increase penalties for child pornography. This has been signed into law.

Both Houses have passed new gift rules for Members of Congress and staff.

Both Houses have passed and signed into law a bill restricting unfunded mandates that we place on States—one of our most important and best pieces of legislation.

Both Houses of Congress have passed welfare reform, ending a destructive 30 year entitlement program, and replacing it with assistance that requires personal responsibility and work. Regrettably, the President vetoed the bill. He said he wanted welfare reform, and when we gave it to him he vetoed it.

The Congress passed legislation to provide a tax credit for families with children. The Congress voted to repeal the Clinton tax increase on Social Security. But, again, the President vetoed both of them.

The President also vetoed legislation that would balance the budget in 7 years. In fact, the President had to be forced after months—and three budgets, to finally produce a budget that was balanced using honest numbers.

Mr. President, the first session of the 104th Congress was an active one—in which many important issues were addressed. I think the American people can be pleased with the job the Republican Congress has done.

Certainly, it has kept its promises—more than any other Congress in my recent memory.

Even the President seems to have picked up on the message of the Republican Congress. In his State of the Union, he said “the era of big government was over.” And we will make it over quicker, if he will stop vetoing the legislation that we pass.

No longer are we talking about starting new Government programs, like health care, but we are talking about getting our fiscal house in order for the future and stability of this country.

In the second session, there are a number of items I think we must tackle.

We need to take up regulatory reform. Compliance with these regulations is costly. It is destructive and time consuming. Regulatory reform legislation would impose a cost benefit analyses for regulations with an annual cost of \$50 million.

The Senate also needs to vote on term limits as soon as possible. I am an original cosponsor of legislation to limit Senators to two terms.

Finally, Mr. President, we need to take up the constitutional amendment to balance the budget. Probably no

issue is more important to our country than this one. We are nearly \$5 trillion in debt, and it will have to be increased right away. It is long past time that we pass the balanced budget amendment.

Every year Americans work longer and harder just to pay their Federal taxes, and every year more and more of that money is being used to pay the interest on the debt. The debt grows, and the amount necessary to service it grows with it. We are truly imposing a massive financial burden on our children and progeny yet unborn. It is wrong, and it is our responsibility to stop it.

In the Senate we fell only one vote short of passing a balanced budget amendment. I hope the majority leader will bring this issue back before the Senate before we adjourn, and I certainly hope that one of the Senators could be persuaded to change his view on this critical issue. It would mean more to the future and stability of this country than anything I can think of at this time.

STATEMENT HONORING THE OLLISON'S FOR CELEBRATING THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, these are trying times for the family in America. Unfortunately, too many broken homes have become part of our national culture. It is tragic that nearly half of all couples married today will see their union dissolve into divorce. The effects of divorce on families and particularly the children of broken families are devastating. In such an era, I believe it is both instructive and important to honor those who have taken the commitment of “til death us do part” seriously and have successfully demonstrated the timeless principles of love, honor, and fidelity, to build a strong family. These qualities make our country strong.

For these important reasons, I rise today to honor Raymond and Charlene Ollison who on February 2 are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary and will renew their wedding vows. My wife, Janet, and I look forward to the day we can celebrate a similar milestone. Raymond and Charlene's commitment to the principles and values of their marriage deserves to be saluted and recognized. I wish them and their family all the best as they celebrate this substantial marker on their journey together.

CURBING YOUTH ACCESS TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, after 2½ years of inexplicable delay, on January 19, 1996, the Department of Health and Human Services [HHS] issued final regulations concerning tobacco sales to minors for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA].

These SAMHSA regulations implement the Alcohol, Drug and Mental

Health Block Grants [ADAMHA] Reauthorization Act of 1992, which required States to prohibit the sale and distribution of tobacco products to minors, take steps to enforce that prohibition and report annually to HHS, or lose Federal substance abuse block grants. While HHS dallied over the final SAMSHA regulations, the Food and Drug Administration—itsself an arm of HHS—proposed a highly intrusive new set of regulations governing tobacco sales, distribution, labeling, advertising, and marketing.

I support the approach taken by the SAMSHA regulations. As Congress specifically required in the ADAMHA Reauthorization Act, the SAMSHA regulations give States the maximum degree of flexibility while ensuring that States do in fact take strong steps to stop the sale of tobacco products to minors. The SAMSHA regulations will accomplish the same goal that FDA professes to want—reducing the use of tobacco by minors—in a shorter time for less money and with much less Government interference.

The Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation in 1994 to address ADAMHA compliance. As an example, the State Department of Agriculture, with assistance from local law enforcement officials, must conduct random, unannounced inspections. Persons under the age of 18 may be enlisted to test compliance, provided that parental consent has been given. Kentucky has also established sign requirements, license requirements, and vending machine restrictions.

Mr. President, I represent 60,000 hard-working tobacco farm families and thousands of hard-working individuals who are involved in the manufacturing and retail of tobacco products. Under the SAMSHA regulations, tobacco growers and others involved in the tobacco industry can rest assured that they will not be subjected to excessive government interference. States where tobacco is grown will be free to craft laws that take into account the needs and interests of tobacco growers. Tobacco growers will not be treated as the enemy. On the other hand, FDA's proposed regulations would treat nicotine as an addictive drug and position the FDA to march on every tobacco farm in the United States. FDA's proposal is unacceptable.

Tobacco already is one of the most heavily regulated products in the United States. More than a dozen Federal agencies have jurisdiction over some aspect of tobacco production, sales, or advertising. In light of this fact, Congress authorized SAMSHA not to impose sweeping Federal tobacco regulations, but instead to encourage States to prevent youth access to tobacco.

Mr. President, I strongly believe that minors should not use or purchase tobacco products. I also believe the most effective way to prevent minors from using or purchasing tobacco products lies in the strict enforcement of laws already in effect in each of the 50

States. A new Federal bureaucracy, as proposed by the President and FDA, is not needed. In 1992, Congress made a bipartisan decision that State officials, not a Federal agency, were best suited to deal with the problem of underage tobacco use. The SAMSHA regulations are a constructive, constitutionally appropriate and cost-effective way to deal with underage tobacco use. The SAMSHA regulations take the right approach. FDA's approach is wrong, excessive, costly, and unnecessary.

THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the impression will not go away: The \$4.9 trillion Federal debt stands today as a sort of grotesque parallel to that energizer bunny that appears and appears and appears on television in precisely the same way and to the same degree that the Federal debt keeps going up and up.

Politicians talk a good game—and "talk" is the operative word—about reducing the Federal deficit and bringing the Federal debt under control. But watch how they vote.

Mr. President, as of the close of business, Wednesday, January 24, the total Federal debt stood at exactly \$4,987,847,422,144.35 or \$18,932.30 per man, woman, child on a per capita basis. *Res ipsa loquitur*.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I thank the Chair for recognizing me.

A RECESS WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss what the Senate is doing actually tomorrow on a very, very critical and important resolution that would put the Senate in recess for 1 month. To my way of thinking this could be the most irresponsible vote the U.S. Senate has taken in a long, long time. A month—30 days, Mr. President.

I think that such action would be the height of irresponsibility. If we think the American public is losing faith and confidence in our legislative institutions, just wait and see how they react when they see the Senate is voting to take a 30-day recess with all of the work that lies ahead.

The Senate and the Congress as a whole has much work to do, a lot of work to do. The shrinking amount of time in which to do it is something that I would like to discuss for a few moments this afternoon.

The first session of the 104th Congress, Mr. President, was one of the

busiest that we have ever seen. Unfortunately, however, it was one of the least productive. I will cite my friend, Senator BILL COHEN's op-ed piece recently in the Washington Post when he said—I think I can quote—"There's a great deal of motion, but very little movement." I think that aptly describes last year.

That first session of Congress lasted 365 days, 1 whole year. Only two other first sessions have lasted 365 days in the course of the Republic's history, Mr. President, the 77th Congress in 1941-42 and the 102d Congress in 1991-92.

The Senate, for example, was in session for 211 days. We took 613 rollcall votes. The House was in session 167 days. The House took 885 rollcall votes. What was the result of all of this movement and action, Mr. President? Only 88 bills were signed into law, the smallest number of bills becoming law since 1933.

Mr. President, a 30-day recess, like the one that is being proposed tomorrow, is truly unprecedented. A review of the Senate's congressional calendar shows the normal pattern for Congress is to begin work after the State of the Union. A short recess around the President's Day holiday is the norm. However, to simply shut down the U.S. Senate, for us not to work until the beginning of March, is a remarkable inconsistency.

So what does that mean for us today? It means that there is a lot for us to do in a year already shortened by the Presidential election. Some have even suggested that the Senate is arranging its schedule, depending upon the primaries in New Hampshire and the special caucuses in Iowa. I am not here to argue whether that is true or false, but that is being charged.

There are bills awaiting our attention that must be addressed, not to further the Democratic agenda or the Republican agenda, but to help the American people and to make their lives better and to live up to our responsibility.

I rise today to talk about some of this imperative legislation that I think we should be working on now rather than recessing tomorrow for a whole month's period.

For example, we are in the midst of a crisis in agriculture, and this affects all of rural America. In fact, it affects all America.

On January 1, some 25 days ago, the 1990 farm bill expired. Because no Congress in 40 years has failed to pass a farm bill, we are still exploring the ramifications of what it means to live under an expired farm bill. In short, chaos in rural America could very easily result. We need action in this area.

What we know for sure is that because there is not a farm bill, American agriculture is now, in large part, operating under laws enacted in the year 1949.

In the past several weeks, lawyers and staff at the U.S. Department of Agriculture began to piece together just

what this means for farmers, for consumers, and for the taxpayers. For example, while the cotton program operates as is until 1997, the rice program, as we know it, has now been terminated. Today across our country, there is no rice program. There has not been for 25 days. The so-called permanent law, or 1949 law, to which we are now reverting, includes provisions for commodities, such as wheat or corn; however, no provisions for rice.

The Secretary of Agriculture has said he would have to use some general authority under the CCC Charter Act to run a rice program, but research is still underway to see what kind of program he might legally operate.

There is great confusion. Arkansas grows 40 percent of all of the rice produced in our country, but other States, such as California, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, are also large rice producers. Pulling together some kind of general authority and running a partial program could be devastating to the rice industry and to the rice farmers in these five States.

It is not just rice farmers who are very anxious right now. As many of my colleagues have pointed out, most farmers cannot even find out if they will be able to plant a crop, much less what that crop might be. Necessary operating credit, those loans that are so important to the American farmer, will not be extended to many farmers unless the various lending institutions have some idea of what the rules or regulations are in rural America relative to the new farm proposals.

Mr. President, with all of this uncertainty hanging over us in rural America, from producers to millers to ginners to seed salesmen to tractor dealers to processors and all the other businesses that serve the agriculture sector, it is unconscionable, I think, for this Congress to even contemplate recessing for a 30-day period.

Let me give you another example of how the American people are paying as a result of congressional inaction.

Last year, Congress made a legislative error in the GATT treaty which is forcing American consumers to pay millions and millions of dollars more for their prescription drugs every day. We had a debate on this floor. We had a very close vote on this floor.

For instance, the world's largest drug company, Glaxo, today is gaining \$6 million a day in undeserved enrichment—\$6 million a day in undeserved enrichment and profits. This single company has so far gained \$300 million, all of it subsidized by the American consumer from this congressional mistake. We had a chance to correct it. We did not meet that obligation. We must have that opportunity again.

Instead of acting quickly to fix it, Congress has let it drag on week after week after week. If we recess for 30 days, consumers across America will be paying another \$180 million in unnecessary health care costs for their drugs. That is outrageous. But there is no